

In the Claims

Claims 1 – 25 (canceled)

26. (original) A process for making a container from a polyester(s) polymer, comprising feeding polyester particles having a degree of crystallinity of at least 15% and an It.V. of at least 0.70 dL/g to an extrusion zone, melting the particles in the extrusion zone to form a molten polyester polymer composition, and forming a sheet or a molded part from extruded molten polyester polymer, wherein the polyester particles fed to the extrusion zone have an It.V. at their surface which is less than 0.25 dL/g higher than the It.V. at their center.
27. (original) The process of claim 26, wherein the It.V. at the surface of the particles is less than 0.20 dL/g higher than the It.V. at the center of the particles.
28. (original) The process of claim 27, wherein the difference between the It.V. of the particles at their surface and their center is 0.10 dL/g or less.
29. (original) The process of claim 28, wherein the difference is 0.05 dL/g or less.
30. (original) The process of claim 26, wherein the molded part is a container preform.
31. (original) The process of claim 30, comprising stretch blow molding the preform into a beverage container.
32. (original) The process of claim 31, wherein the container has a volume of 3 liters or less.
33. (original) The process of claim 27, comprising drying the particles in a drying zone at temperature of at least 140°C before melting the particles in the extrusion zone.
34. (original) The process of claim 26, further comprising drying the particles before feeding the particles to the extrusion zone, wherein the particles are not solid state polymerized before drying.
35. (original) The process of claim 34, wherein the particles have an acetaldehyde level of 10 ppm or less prior to melting in the extrusion zone.

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36. (original) The process of claim 26, wherein the polyester polymer particles comprise:

(a) a carboxylic acid component comprising at least 90 mole% of the residues of terephthalic acid, or derivatives of terephthalic acid, or mixtures thereof, and

(b) a hydroxyl component comprising at least 90 mole% of the residues of ethylene glycol,

based on 100 mole percent of the carboxylic acid component residues and 100 mole percent hydroxyl component residues in the polyester polymer, and at least 75% of the polyester polymer is virgin polymer.

37. (original) The process of claim 36, wherein the polyester polymer particles comprises:

(a) a carboxylic acid component comprising at least 92 mole% of the residues of terephthalic acid, or derivatives of terephthalic acid, or mixtures thereof, and

(b) a hydroxyl component comprising at least 92 mole% of the residues of ethylene glycol,

based on 100 mole percent of the carboxylic acid component residues and 100 mole percent hydroxyl component residues in the polyester polymer.

38. (original) The process of claim 37, wherein the degree of crystallinity is at least 25%.

39. (original) The process of claim 26, wherein the degree of crystallinity is at least 35%.

40. (original) The process of claim 26, comprising a bulk of said particles having a volume of at least 1 cubic meter.

Claims 41 – 52 (canceled)

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Please add the following claims:

53. (new) The process of claim 26, wherein the polyester polymer particles are not solid state polymerized before introducing said particles to the extrusion zone.

54. (new) The process of claim 53, wherein the article formed from the polyester polymer composition in the extrusion zone is a preform.

55. (new) The process of claim 54, wherein the preform is stretch blow molded into a beverage container.

56. (new) The process of claim 26, wherein the particles have an acetaldehyde level of 10 ppm or less prior to melting in the extrusion zone.

57. (new) The process of claim 56, wherein the difference between the It.V. of the particles at their surface and at their center is 0.05 dL/g or less.

58. (new) The process of claim 57, wherein the polyester particles introduced into the extrusion zone have a degree of crystallinity of at least 35 percent.

59. (new) The process of claim 26, wherein polyester particles having a degree of crystallinity of at least 25 percent and an It.V. of at least 0.75 dL/g obtained without solid state polymerization and having an It.V. at their surface which is less than 0.20 dL/g higher than the It.V. at the center of the particles are fed to said extrusion zone, melted to form said polyester polymer composition, and formed into a bottle preform.

60. (new) The process of claim 59, wherein the degree of crystallinity is at least 35 percent, the It.V. is at least 0.77 dL/g.

61. (new) The process of claim 60, wherein the difference between the It.V. of the particles at their surface is less than 0.05 dL/g higher than the It.V. at their center.